

Remarks in a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters

January 5, 2023

The President. All right. Happy New Year, everybody. And look out for your own safety with one another back there. [*Laughter*]

Today we're meeting to make sure that we deliver—continue to deliver lower inflation, more jobs, and an economy that works for everybody and that works from the bottom up and the middle out, not trickle-down economies—economics, which is one of the reasons I ran for office in the first place. I've never seen trickle-down work very much for working class families.

After a rough few years, we're seeing really bright spots, I believe, and—across our entire Nation. And I think we've made some real progress in the last going on 2 years now. Almost 2.

And—but now we need to focus on implementing some of the big laws that we actually passed, and—so the American people can feel the benefits of what we've done.

The big laws we've passed are consequential, but they were basically promises to most people. They passed them, they're now the law, they're going to happen, but they didn't take effect.

For example, the whole idea of paying, you know, \$35 for insulin—well, that's a nice promise after it was made 6 months ago. And it's in the law, but it didn't take place until January 1. People are only now going to begin to see it.

And details matter. And being responsive to the American public obviously matters a great deal. And that's what we're going to discuss today.

For example, as of this week, I told you that seniors are—insulin is going to be 35 bucks instead of 400 bucks for a month. Millions on Medicare are going to be allowed to pay zero for most of the vaccines they're going to have—they're going to need.

Drugmakers are going to face penalties if they hike prices faster than the rate of inflation, unless they can demonstrate they've made significant new investments to make the product better.

Families can get up to \$3,200 tax credits to make their homes more energy efficient, reducing their prices, it's estimated, at 500 bucks a year. It's going to make a difference in their lives—and by putting on new windows, new doors, lowering energy bills. A whole range of things they're going to be able to do.

And folks need to know how to take advantage of these benefits that we passed—we've gotten passed. And about half of these benefits are the consequence of bipartisan legislation that we actually were able to get done.

And so—but that's on us. That's on all of us around the table here to make sure we get that message out clearly and in a way that these laws were designed to work.

But I know we can do it. I'm confident we're going to be able to do that. And that's why I'm so optimistic about this new year. There's just a lot to implement, if you look around at all the major pieces of legislation we've passed.

And I might add, parenthetically, we reduced the deficit \$1.7 trillion in 2 years. Okay? Nobody has ever done that before. And so it's—this idea that we're big spenders and we've just ballooned the deficit. Wrong. Wrong. We actually brought it down. [*Laughter*]

And so—but as I said, it's up to us to get the word out. And the—we've already had—major companies have invested three—committed to invest \$300 billion in the near term, largely thanks to the CHIPS and Research Act [CHIPS and Science Act; White House correction] that we passed. It's going to make a gigantic difference. It's going to employ a lot of people.

For example, I was talking to some of the folks yesterday from Ohio and that "field of dreams" that I talked about. You know, I went—there are going to be 7,000 construction jobs, but 3,000 of those jobs are going to be full-time jobs, and the average salary is going to be—I think it's \$132,000 a year, or \$126,000 a year. You don't need a college degree for all those jobs. That's what I call, in the neighborhood I come from, real progress.

And so, you know—and I don't know where it's written—you've heard me say this before—that we can't lead the world in manufacturing again. Because that \$300 billion in manufacturing, largely thanks to the CHIPS Act, we expect—between public and private investment, we expect another \$3.5 trillion to be invested in the next decade.

And that means jobs. That means growth. It means security. It means economic prosperity. It means that our—everything from our national defenses to our economic strength is going to be sustained.

And so we're—as I said just yesterday, as you know, because some of you traipsed down to the Brent Spence Bridge with me in between Ohio and Kentucky, folks have been talking about repairing that bridge for decades. And we're finally getting it done.

We're getting it done by working together, Democrats and Republicans, which was my message yesterday when I was joined by Mitch McConnell and a Republican Governor and others, a bipartisan group of leaders in both our parties to—and I realize that's redundant, but it's important to note that.

And you know—and today, consistent with the Executive order I issued, the Federal Trade Commission is going to take a huge step forward in banning noncompete agreements that are designed simply to lower people's wages.

It's one thing to say you have—you can't work at a—inside, in a technology company on a special project that has scientific consequences and move to another company without a noncompete agreement. It's another thing to say you're working for Subway and you can't walk across the street and go to Jimmy John's and get a 20-cent raise. What the hell is that all about other than keeping wages down?

And so these agreements block millions of retail workers, construction workers, and other working folks from taking better jobs, getting better pay and benefits in the same field.

And so the bottom line is, I believe our economic vision is working. And we're in the process of implementing the first piece that we've gotten done, and we're going to move on.

And we're exporting projects instead of exporting jobs, I might add.

You know, when we—the first Cabinet meeting, I told you all—and you kind of looked at me like, "Do you mean it?"—was that we're going to be in a position where—in the United States of America, there was a law that the passed in the late thirties that says that when the President is given money to spend to purchase anything from a deck of an aircraft carrier to railings on public buildings, he can decide and he should—he—if he wishes to or she wishes to—can decide that they are going to spend that on an—that money on American-made products: American steel, American companies, et cetera.

Well, it was never done very much. I think there—it was at 50 percent and—anyway—well, guess what? We did it. And you did it, all of you around this table. And the end result of that is

that we're exporting product instead of jobs. We're exporting product instead of jobs. And that's a big deal. It's a gigantic deal.

And so we're in a situation now where, you know, the idea that we're seeing solid growth, a resilient labor market, and signs of inflation is easing—it doesn't mean it's all over. It means that, well, we're off to a pretty darn good start. And I just don't want to get us suckered into thinking that we can sort of let up on the gas pedal of what we've already passed and make sure we implement it properly.

And the—so it means implementing and delivering real benefits for everyday lives of the American people. And we're also going to implement these key domestic initiatives here in the U.S., but we also need to have, as one of our top priorities—our priorities overseas, which this guy——

[At this point, the President grabbed the arm of Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, who was seated to his right.]

——and the Intelligence Committee are handling—in addition, the Intelligence Committee—are handling extremely well.

Right now, the war in Ukraine is at a critical point. We have—we have to do everything we can to help the Ukrainians resist Russian aggression, and Russia is not attempting to slow up. The actions they're taking are as barbaric as they were a year ago, and they're not letting up at all—at all.

Earlier this afternoon I had a long discussion with Olaf Scholz and—about Ukraine and—our alliances in Europe and the EU. And we have a large—much larger contingent of countries that share our view, including Japan and others. But we talked about what we're going to do.

And today we jointly announced—you've already gotten copies of it—a statement saying that we're going to increase the support for Ukraine. We are going to provide the Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles—the United States—to the Ukrainians, and the Germans are going to provide the Marder Infantry Fighting Vehicles that they have to the Ukrainians.

And, in addition, we're going to help defend Ukraine against Russian air attacks. Germany has also announced that—today that it's going to provide the Ukrainians a—the—to deal with air attacks, a Patriot air defense system. We're going to provide an additional Patriot air defense battery. They work, and the Russians are beginning to realize that. They function well, and they're helping a lot.

And so I guess what I'm saying is that there's a lot—a lot—to get done, a lot we've started on. And I think we're on the right path. We're on the right path to bring America back and keep it back, not just bring it back.

I was talking with the Vice President earlier today. She and I were in the office just talking, and we talked about, this is not about getting back to a level spot; this is about going to a whole new plateau. That's been the history of the country. It's not just that we've gradually increased.

We have—and I know even my Cabinet members are probably getting tired of hearing me saying it. We're the only country in the world who's come out of every crisis stronger than we went in. Stronger than we went in. Stronger than we went in. And that means a whole new platform, a whole new plateau we're at—we've reached. And we're going to continue to do that. This is not just about staying, you know, level. It's about significantly increasing our capacity and opportunities for the American people.

And lastly—I say this with some humility sitting next to the Secretary of State—but I think the rest of the world knows, Tony, that what we do, they'll benefit from. We—unlike other nations that had power, we're not trying to hoard the power. We know we're better off when every other nation is doing better. For real. For real.

And so that's why I'm excited about the next 2 years. I think we're going to—you've heard me say it a hundred times, but I am more optimistic about America's prospects than I've ever been in my career.

So thank you all for coming in. I know you have 6,000 questions. The answer is yes, no, yes, yes, no. [*Laughter*]

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Q. What do events at the Capitol tell you about your future cooperation with Congress?

Second Anniversary of the January 6, 2021, Attack on the U.S. Capitol

Q. Sir, can you talk about the January 6 event tomorrow—the significance of the January 6 event tomorrow?

The President. Do I think what?

[*The President turned toward Secretary Blinken.*]

What did he say?

Secretary Blinken. January 6. He's asking about the anniversary.

The President. Oh.

Pray God it never happens again.

Q. And the group that's invited to commemorate the anniversary—the thinking behind who you invited, who you're giving awards to tomorrow?

The President. A lot of thinking, but we'll tell you about it tomorrow.

The President's Relations With Congress

Q. What do events in the Capitol tell you about your future cooperation with Congress?

The President. I always cooperate with Congress.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:16 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell; Gov. Mike DeWine of Ohio; and Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Cabinet meeting; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Blinken, Antony J.; DeWine, Mike; Harris, Kamala D.; McConnell, A. Mitchell; Scholz, Olaf.

Subjects: 2021 civil unrest and violence at U.S. Capitol; Bipartisanship; Cabinet, meetings with the President; Economic improvement; Energy efficiency and weatherization, homes and buildings; Export flows, U.S. improvement efforts; Federal deficit and debt; Federal Trade Commission; Germany, assistance to Ukraine; Germany, Chancellor; Inflation; Insulin cost controls; Job creation and growth; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Medicare and

Medicaid programs; Employer noncompete agreements, regulation efforts; Ohio, Governor; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Secretary of State; Semiconductor manufacturing; Senate Minority Leader; Tax Code reform; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; Vice President.

DCPD Number: DCPD202300008.